

Gabb]

492

[Aug. 15,

161 enumeration of the population. My process was to get together several
 124 of the most intelligent and well-informed men in the district ; cause them
 [211] to compare notes and then to tie a series of knots in strings as they are
 accustomed to do ; different kinds of knots distinguishing the sexes. Each
 house was counted separately, so that I obtained an exact census of the
 whole country with the following results. This cord census is now in the
 museum of the Smithsonian Institution, with many other articles, illus-
 trating the life and customs of the people.

The population of each district is as follows :

[162]	Tiribi.....	103
	Uren.....	604
	Bri-bri.....	172
	Cabecar.....	128
	The Valley.....	219
	Total.....	1226

This covers all of the water-sheds of the Tilorio and Tiliri rivers ex-
 cept two small bands ; the Changinas on the Changina branch of the
 Tilorio and a refugee remnant of the Cabecars on the extreme head of
 the Tiliri. Probably an additional hundred would cover all of these.

On the North or Estrella river, and on the Chiripo, there are a few
 more Cabecars who have little communication with the headquarters of
 the tribe, but who are in the habit of going out to Limon or Matina for
 what little trade they require. These are probably in all, not more than
 200 or 300 in number. Nearly all speak Spanish and they are gradually
 approximating to civilized or semi-civilized ways.

[461] The cause of the rapid decrease in the population is their extreme in-
 146 dolence. With a country fitted to produce all the fruits of the tropics ;
 262 where maize grows luxuriantly, and where cattle and pigs increase with-
 out care or labor ; they are content to make plantains their staple, and
 [273] almost their only food. Chicha the form in which most of their maize
 is used, is a beverage very slightly intoxicating, if drunk in large quanti-
 ties, but the amount of nutriment derived from it is unimportant. Meat,
 whether of domestic or wild animals, is a rarity and a luxury, and the
 banana or plantain make up all deficiencies. The natural consequence
 of a bulky and comparatively innutritious diet is a low physical state.
 147 The system has little resisting power against disease, or healing power
 164 over wounds. A slight attack of coast fever, which, with an ordinary
 strong man of our own race, would be comparatively harmless, is very
 apt to terminate fatally with these people. Indolent ulcers are so com-
 mon that perhaps a full fourth of not only adults, but even children
 have them, usually on the legs, originating in some slight scratch or
 bruise ; and very few of the elderly persons are without their sores.
 These ulcers often last for years, and I have seen them as broad as the
 two hands opened side by side. Although the local diseases are few, the
 entire absence of medical treatment, the ignorance of the first principles

1874.]

493

[Gabb.

of hygiene, and the universal negligence of the sick, on the part of the well, all contribute to shorten the average life-term of the people, so that very few old men or women are to be found, and the mortality is so great among the young that the deaths more than counterbalance the births. Unless some great change takes place, the whole of the tribes of Talamanca will have disappeared within two or three generations more. The Tiribis, who like the others have strict rules about marriage, within certain degrees of consanguinity, are now so reduced that several young men and women are to-day forced to remain unmarried for want of proper mates sufficiently removed in relationship. But at the beginning of this century they were powerful enough to give battle to the Bri-bri. The Changinas and Shelabas have disappeared and the fate of the other tribes requires no prophet to foretell.

Physically, the people of all the tribes bear a strong resemblance to each other. They are of short stature, broad shouldered, heavily built, full in the chest, with well-formed limbs, and well muscled throughout. Their color is similar to that of the North American Indians, or, if anything different, perhaps a little lighter. There seems to be but little, if any admixture of foreign blood among them. Their history would hardly lead us to expect it. They have lived very exclusively, and it has hardly been half a century since they have ceased to live in a state of open war with all intruders from the coast side. The Spanish occupation closed so disastrously over a century and a half ago, was of too short duration, and and the whites were too few, to make a permanent impression on a then populous country.

The following measurements taken from my servant, a full grown man, who is not more than an inch, if so much, under the average height, will give a fair idea of their build. He measures in height, 5 ft. 1½ in., circumference of chest, under the arms 35½ inches; of hips 34 inches, of waist 33½ inches, length from axilla to tips of the fingers, 24½ inches; leg, from the groin to the ground, 29 inches. Both sexes are marked by an almost perfect absence of hair from all parts of the person except the head; where there is a dense growth of coarse, straight black hair. This the women plait with considerable taste. The men wear theirs cut moderately long and of an even length all round; or a few retaining an older fashion, have it a little over a foot long, apparently its entire natural length, and either let it stream loosely over the shoulders, gather it into two plaits, or twist it into a roll, bound with a strip of mastate, and coiled at the back of the head in a round flat mass.

The breasts of the women are not conical, as occurs with many, if not most of the Indian races; but are fully as globular as those of the European or African. Nor are they directed laterally. They are not generally large, though some marked exceptions occur to this rule. But they have one strongly marked peculiarity. The entire areolar area is developed into a globular protuberance, completely enveloping and hiding the nipple. The development of this part begins with, almost